



MEDIA RELEASE

6 February 2024

The Snow Foundation commits \$500,000 to help young care leavers in Canberra

A new partnership between The Snow Foundation and the Sisters of Charity Foundation will distribute up to \$100,000 per year for five years in scholarships so young care leavers in Canberra and surrounding areas can afford to study at university or TAFE.

The scholarships are available to young people with an out-of-home care background (including foster care, residential care, kinship care, and/or being a ward of the State) who are living or wishing to study in Canberra and its surrounds – including the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Yass, Braidwood, Goulburn, and Snowy Monaro regions.

Nationally, approximately 46,200 children are in out-of-home care, with 690 of those based in the ACT. The numbers of care leavers accessing tertiary education are dismal with only around 1% of care leavers pursuing university in their lifetimes, compared to 40% of their peers.

“The scholarship program was established to support the 99% of young people with out-of-home care backgrounds that are missing out on going to university, and getting a degree that can change the trajectory of their lives,” Sisters of Charity Foundation CEO Louise M Burton said.

“Our scholarships provide practical support for recipients, who have all experienced complex and challenging childhoods; often experiencing feelings of abandonment, low self-esteem, neglect, abuse and having grown up in multiple homes with multiple carers or parental incarceration.”

The Snow Foundation is pleased to be able to support this important initiative in the Canberra region.

“Scholarships are an important focus for The Snow Foundation in Canberra and the surrounding regions, and a particular passion for our founder, Terry Snow,” The Snow Foundation CEO Georgina Byron said.

“We are excited to expand our scholarship offering for 2024 and thrilled to partner with the Sisters of Charity Foundation, making tertiary education accessible for young people with out-of-home care backgrounds. Bridging this gap means that, regardless of their past, these young adults can embark on achieving their goals for further education.”

Scholarship student Ruby is available to interview.

For all media enquiries please contact Sisters of Charity Foundation Communications Manager Nicole Macdonald at nicole.macdonald@sistersofcharityfoundation.org.au or phone (02) 9367 1211.

University scholarships are valued at up to \$30,000 for a course, and TAFE scholarships are valued at \$5,000 per year for the duration of a course.

Changing lives – Ruby’s story

“From the age of nine I’ve been in and out of out-of-home care,” says Ruby, a current scholarship student who is studying a Bachelor of Communications. “Living in OOHC at such a young age – you lose the spark in your eyes. From a young age I lost that spark and joy that should be treasured for so many years.

“I was bullied just for being in OOHC when I was in high school and it really isolated me, alienated me from my peers. Even though I struggled with education, I struggled with going to school – I went to nine schools, the number of schools I went to is ridiculous – I always wanted to go to uni.

“I started a Diploma of Communications majoring in journalism in February 2022. I finished it in 2023, and then I went on to study my second year of my Bachelor of Communications majoring in journalism.

“Young people in out-of-home care get support from the age of roughly 16 until the age of 21. But once you’re 21, you are cut off. I was like, what am I going to do with my life? I have a very basic casual job and I live off Centrelink. What am I going to do, how am I going to support myself, live by myself, go to uni every day?

“And so, I did a little research, and I found the scholarship from the Sisters of Charity Foundation, and I was like, this is too good to be true. I put in my application, and I got the scholarship.

“So far it has been the most amazing, supportive Foundation and scholarship that I could have received because it gave me a chance to focus on my education in a way that allowed me to succeed. I don’t think I would actually be passing my units at uni with HDs (High Distinctions) and Distinctions if it wasn’t for having the security of a scholarship.”

The Snow Foundation is committed to ensuring local young people with a similar background to Ruby get the same opportunity – and go on to become active and engaged members of our community.

The Sisters of Charity Foundation is now accepting 2024 applications for ACT-based students, or students wishing to study in Canberra or surrounding areas.

To apply, visit sistersofcharityfoundation.org.au/how-we-help/tertiary-scholarship-program-students and fill out an application form. Applications will be processed as soon they are submitted.

About the Sisters of Charity Foundation Tertiary Scholarship Program

For young people who have grown up in out-of-home care, embarking on a tertiary education is extraordinarily difficult. They must overcome significant social and economic barriers: from frequent school changes, absenteeism and lower expectations from carers and teachers to lack of family support, unstable housing or homelessness, and unemployment.

The vast majority of these young people lack the emotional and financial support that most of us take for granted and are among the most disadvantaged in our community.

Scholarship student Ruby is available to interview.

For all media enquiries please contact Sisters of Charity Foundation Communications Manager Nicole Macdonald at nicole.macdonald@sistersofcharityfoundation.org.au or phone (02) 9367 1211.

Financial support helps our scholarship recipients afford university and TAFE study expenses such as course fees and textbooks, as well as the cost of living on their own with no parental support. It also allows them to take advantage of opportunities that boost their chances of career success, such as attending conferences and networking events, or completing internships.

A scholarship means our students can focus on their studies without needing to hold down multiple jobs at the same time.

To be eligible to apply for the Tertiary Scholarship Program, applicants must:

- Be an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident
- Be aged 27 or under
- Be currently in out-of-home care, or have previously been in out-of-home care
- Demonstrate that they are experiencing educational disadvantage and financial hardship
- Demonstrate academic achievements, commitment, and motivation to study and to successfully complete the course, and to gain employment
- Correctly complete an [application form](#) and attach all supporting documents as indicated.

[Click here to learn more about the Tertiary Scholarship Program.](#)

[Click here for more scholarship student case studies.](#)

[Click here to find Tertiary Scholarship Program application forms.](#)

About the Sisters of Charity Foundation

The Sisters of Charity Foundation is a progressive not-for-profit, dedicated to the development of life-changing social justice programs that provide compassion, hope and practical assistance to people experiencing financial hardship. The Sisters of Charity Foundation feeds, houses, and educates some of the most disadvantaged, marginalised and socially isolated people in our community – no matter their religion, ethnicity, gender, age or ability.



Sisters of Charity
Foundation

sistersofcharityfoundation.org.au

About The Snow Foundation

The Snow Foundation was founded in Canberra by brothers Terry and George Snow in 1991. Today it is a family philanthropic organisation that creates opportunities and strengthens resilience for a more caring and inclusive community.



snowfoundation.org.au

Scholarship student Ruby is available to interview.

For all media enquiries please contact Sisters of Charity Foundation Communications Manager Nicole Macdonald at nicole.macdonald@sistersofcharityfoundation.org.au or phone (02) 9367 1211.